



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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August 28, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name and title.

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

WASHINGTON, D.C. UPDATE

Senator Boxer's Field Briefing on Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Senator Boxer is hosting a September 4, 2008 field briefing on the reauthorization of Federal surface transportation programs to which each Supervisor has received an invitation letter. As indicated in the letter, Senator Boxer is interested in learning the highway, transit, and highway safety priorities for Los Angeles County and other Southern California counties. The County's Department of Public Works is preparing a paper outlining the County's priorities for use by the Board.

The current authorization for surface transportation programs, including highway programs, will expire at the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2009. Senator Boxer chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, which will play a major role in next year's reauthorization legislation because it has jurisdiction over the construction and maintenance of highways and bridges in the Senate.

Pursuit of County Position on Legislation

National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act of 2007: On July 31, 2008, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure approved H.R. 6658 (Oberstar, D-MN), the Disaster Response, Recovery, and Mitigation Enhancement Act of 2008. The bill authorizes several core Federal Emergency Management Agency

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(FEMA) programs and activities, including the existing Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Program at \$250 million a year through Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011. It also codifies programs that FEMA is currently administering under the authority of the Stafford Act, but which are not expressly authorized in statute, including the National Urban Search and Rescue System (US&R). This system was created by FEMA in 1990 to have a national rescue capability to respond to emergencies involving collapsed structures although it also has been used in other disasters. Instead of using in-house Federal personnel, the US&R system relies on local resources in the form of 28 local task forces, including the County's Fire Department which is one of eight task forces in California.

Congress has annually appropriated funds for training, equipment, and capacity building of the US&R system despite the absence of specific authorizing language. H.R. 6658 incorporated the provisions of H.R. 4158 (Cohen, D-TN), the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act of 2007, which was introduced in November 2007 and would expressly authorize the US&R system. It also includes language reimbursing employers for compensation paid to their employees who serve on a task force or fill in for other employees who serve on a task force and clarifying that task force members in the performance of duties shall be treated as if they are Federal employees for purposes of workers compensation benefits and liability coverage.

The County's Fire Department supports the US&R system and the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act of 2007, which would expressly authorize the US&R system in Federal law. **Based on policies in the County's Federal Legislative Agenda supporting proposals and funding to improve the capacity of state and local governments to plan, prepare, and respond to emergencies, the County's Washington, D.C. advocates will support legislation, such as H.R. 6658 or H.R. 4158, which includes the National Urban Search and Rescue Response System Act of 2007.**

It is expected that H.R. 6658 will be considered on the House floor next month after Congress reconvenes from its summer recess. A Senate companion bill to H.R. 6658 and H.R. 4158 has not yet been introduced, but their proponents are working to secure support for the legislation in the Senate.

We will continue to keep you advised.

WTF:GK
MAL:MT:hg

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist